

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 AID-20 OMB-01 EUR-25 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 /138 R

DRAFTED BY AF/RA:JWWALKER:HRB

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PFOR, OAU, US

SUBJECT: BRIEFING FOR NEW OAU SECRETARY GENERAL

REFERENCE: YAOUNDE 2162

1. FOLLOWING INFORMATION IN RESPONSE REQUEST REFTEL IS DRAWN MAINLY FROM PUBLIC SOURCES AVAILABLE IN US WHICH MAY PRESENT MORE COMPLETE PICTURE CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN ETHIOPIA THAN IS AVAILABLE YAOUNDE. YOU MAY DRAW ON THE FOLLOWING FOR YOUR BRIEFING OF ETEKI.

2. THE ARMY ROUNDUP OF CONSERVATIVE LAND-OWNING ARISTOCRATS APPEARS TO REPRESENT A VICTORY FOR PROGRESSIVES IN ARMED FORCES AND GOVERNMENT WHO HAD BEEN GROWING INCREASINGLY RESTLESS WITH SLOW PACE OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REFORMS PROMISED BY ENDALKACHEW GOVERNMENT. A NUMBER OF PROMINENT ETHIOPIANS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED. NONE OF THE CURRENT MINISTERS IS BELIEVED TO BE UNDER DETENTION AT THIS TIME.

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3. COMMUNIQUE ISSUED IN NAME OF ALL BRANCHES ARMED

FORCES, IMPERIAL BODY-GUARD, POLICE AND TERRITORIAL ARMY SAID THE MILITARY WAS ARRESTING OFFICIALS "WHO ACTED OR WERE CONSPIRING TO OBSTRUCT THE SMOOTH FUNCTION" OF ENDALKACHEW'S GOVERNMENT. STATEMENT DEMANDED THESE PEOPLE

HAND THEMSELVES OVER VOLUNTARILY AND WARNED THAT THOSE WHO DID NOT COOPERATE WOULD BE CONSIDERED "CONSPIRATORS AGAINST THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE".

4. RAS MESFIN SILESHI, FORMER GOVERNOR OF SHOA RELIABLY REPORTED TO HAVE ESCAPED ARREST AND FLED CITY. HE AND ASRATE KASSA (REPORTEDLY UNDER ARREST) ARE AMONG ETHIOPIA'S LARGEST LAND OWNERS WITH CLOSE TIES TO EMPEROR. FOUR MINISTERS WERE SELECTED BY THE CABINET HEADED BY FOREIGN MINISTER ZEWDE GEBRE SELASSIE TO MEET WITH A GROUP OF MILITARY REPRESENTATIVES DURING THE EVENING OF JUNE 29. HAILE SELASSIE MILITARY ACADEMY GRADUATES WERE THE ONES WHO GAVE THE ORDERS FOR THE ARRESTS.

5. ONLY VIOLENCE REPORTED WAS SOME GUN FIRE LATE JUNE 29 NEAR AIRPORT.

RUMORS HAVE IT THAT MILITARY SEEKING TO TAKE INTO CUSTODY ANYWHERE FROM A FEW DOZEN TO A FEW HUNDRED PEOPLE. ADDIS REMAINS UNDER 11:00 PM AND 6:00 AM CURFEW. MEANWHILE LIFE CONTINUES MUCH AS USUAL IN ATMOSPHERE OF UNNATURAL CALM.

6. THERE IS SOME SPECULATION THAT ENDALKACHEW MAY SOON BE FORCED TO RESIGN. ALTHOUGH MILITARY COMMUNIQUE PLEDGED "UNSWERVING LOYALTY TO THE EMPEROR AND THE NATION", NO SUCH SUPPORT WAS MENTIONED FOR ENDALKACHEW GOVERNMENT. FIRST ACTIONS LEADING UP TO SUNDAY'S ARRESTS BEGAN FRIDAY EVENING WHEN MILITARY OCCUPIED GOVERNMENT RADIO STATION AND THE PRIVATELY OWNED VOICE OF THE GOSPEL AND BEGAN BROADCASTING CONDEMNATIONS OF 8 DEPUTIES WHO EARLIER LAST WEEK HAD CALLED FOR THE RELEASE OF 25 DETAINED CABINET MINISTERS, OFFICERS AND HIGH OFFICIALS OF THE OLD AKLILU GOVERNMENT.

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7. ALTHOUGH THE COMMUNIQUE ACCUSES THE EIGHT DEPUTIES AND OTHER UNNAMED OFFICIALS OF SEEKING "BY DUBIOUS MEANS" TO GAIN THE MINISTERS' RELEASE THUS ENABLING THEM TO EVADE LEGAL PROCEEDINGS FOR CORRUPTION, THE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE CORRUPTION BUT WHETHER CONSERVATIVES OR PROGRESSIVES WILL GOVERN. SISCO

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